

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PEKING 02993 210820Z
ACTION EA-12

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INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03
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INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
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PASS AGRICULTURE

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR ECEM CH
SUBJ: CHEMICAL FERTILIZER -- PRC

REF: HONG KONG 15424

1. SUMMARY. OUTPUT OF CHEMICAL FERTILIZER HAS RISEN SHARPLY IN THE PRC DURING 1977. MANUFACTURE OF NITROGEN FERTILIZERS HAS GROWN MORE RAPIDLY THAN PRODUCTION OF PHOSPHOROUS AND POTASSIUM FERTILIZERS. THE INBALANCE THUS CREATED WILL MARKEDLY INCREASE IMPORTS OF PHOSPHOROUS FERTILIZER AND POTASH IF DEFICIENCIES ARE TO BE AVOIDED. END SUMMARY.

2. REFTTEL, CITING DEC 11 NCNA RELEASE, REPORTED THAT THROUGH DEC. 10, 1977, THE PRC HAD INCREASED OUTPUT OF CHEMICAL FERTILIZERS BY 31.9 PERCENT OVER THE SAME PERIOD IN 1975.

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PAGE 02 PEKING 02993 210820Z

3. PRC IMPORTS OF NITROGEN FERTILIZER FROM JAPAN DURING FIRST HALF OF 1977 WERE ABOUT EQUAL TO THOSE OF 1975 -- ABOUT ONE MILLION TONS. IMPORTS DURING 1974 AND 1975 WERE ABOUT STABLE AT 1.7 AND 1.9 MILLION TONS RESPECTIVELY.

4. IF IT IS ASSUMED THAT FERTILIZER IMPORTS BY

THE PRC WERE ABOUT THE SAME IN 1977 AS THEY WERE IN 1975, WE CALCULATE THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN NECESSARY FOR THE PRC TO IMPORT 340,000 TONS OF ADDITIONAL PHOSPHOROUS FERTILIZER AND 728,000 TONS OF ADDITIONAL POTASSIUM FERTILIZER IN 1977 IN ORDER TO HAVE MAINTAINED THE SAME BALANCE BETWEEN CHEMICAL NITROGEN, PHOSPHOROUS AND POTASSIUM FERTILIZERS AS EXISTED IN 1975.

5. CANADIAN FERTILIZER SPECIALISTS, ACCOMPANYING A CANADIAN POTASH SALES DELEGATION, MAINTAIN THAT THERE ALREADY EXISTED A POTASSIUM DEFICIENCY IN THE PRC BEFORE 1977. IF THIS IS TRUE, THE INCREASED AVAILABILITY OF NITROGEN FERTILIZER WOULD EXAGGERATE THE DEFICIENCY.

6. THE CANADIAN FERTILIZER SPECIALISTS REPORTED THAT CHINESE TECHNICIANS TOLD THEM THAT CHINESE PEASANTS WILLINGLY APPLIED ADDITIONAL CHEMICAL NITROGEN FERTILIZERS AS THEY WERE QUICKLY ABLE TO OBSERVE A RESPONSE. HOWEVER, THEY WERE MORE RELUCTANT TO INCREASE USE OF CHEMICAL PHOSPHOROUS AND POTASSIUM FERTILIZERS AS THE REPOSSES WERE NOT SO EASILY SEEN.

7. THE US WHEAT STUDIES DELEGATION WHICH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 PEKING 02993 210820Z

VISITED THE PRC IN THE SUMMER OF 1976 POINTED OUT SEVERAL WHEAT FIELDS TO WHICH TOO MUCH NITROGEN HAD BEEN APPLIED.

8. IT IS WIDELY REPORTED BY THE CHINESE THAT ABOUT 80 PERCENT OF THE NUTRIENTS ADDED TO THE SOIL ANNUALLY IS ORGANIC IN NATURE AND ONLY 20 PERCENT IS APPLIED AS CHEMICAL FERTILIZER. THE US VEGETABLES STUDIES DELEGATION, IN CHINA IN THE SUMMER OF 1977, CALCULATED THAT CHINESE ORGANIC FERTILIZERS ARE WELL BALANCED IN THEIR PLANT NUTRIENT CONTENT.

9. WITH SUCH A HIGH PROPORTION OF ADDED SOIL NUTRIENTS BEING PROVIDED FROM ORGANIC SOURCES, DEFICIENCY SYMPTOMS ARISING FROM AN INADEQUATE BALANCE OF NUTRIENTS OF CHEMICAL SOURCE MAY BE SLOW IN MANIFESTING THEMSELVES. HOWEVER, WITH INCREASED USE OF CHEMICAL NITROGEN FERTILIZER, AS IS APPARENTLY THE PLAN, EITHER SHORTAGES OF PHOSPHOROUS AND POTASSIUM WILL OCCUR OR INCREASED PRODUCTION AND/OR IMPORTS MUST TAKE PLACE.

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